

ALPACAS, STEERS, AND A 'CHOCOLATE LAB': A COMPLEMENT FOR LIFE AWAY FROM DUCKPINS



When one thinks of Duckpin Bowling, farm life doesn't readily come to mind. But for Westminster's Jeanne Bowers, the game named after the 'Quackers' is right at home in a rural setting.

Jeanne is the secretary of the Monday Morning Seniors league at Thunderhead Lanes in Taneytown, Maryland, and has been doing the job for past four years. But just a short jaunt down the road a piece, after leaving the 'ducks' on the bowling lanes, she is welcomed home by the real ducks on the Bowers farm from their own pond. Jeanne and her husband, Craig, reside on a 13 acre spread that they've owned and occupied since 1979.

A first impression that one gets when setting foot on the property is that it's a lot to maintain. The Bowers' farm certainly lives up to such a reputation.

I recently had occasion to visit Jeanne at her residence, and my first encounter was with the family's strikingly lovable, large Chocolate Labrador Retriever, named Valley.

A breathtaking scenic view is a wonderful part of the farm, and during the outdoor tour of the property, there were a number of noteworthy faces.

At least three large (approximately 900 pound) steers were in the nearest corral, as well as a younger calf on the scene, and behind them were a group of alpacas – two white and one brown. Jeanne stated that although the alpacas looked of a substantial girth, they're actually pretty slender when their fur is cut down.

Indoor life at the Bowers' is most fascinating. They do take time for fun, when the opportunity presents itself. In their downstairs game room is an 8-foot slate pool table, along with a 25-foot shuffleboard unit, which they acquired from the Pocono Mountains area. For the grandkids, on site is an electric hobby-horse of the type that operates with the insertion of a quarter.

Jeanne is a collector of a lot of vintage items, including Longaberger baskets, old-style milk bottles, and the famous Bowers

candy tins. She also has made it a policy over the years to collect at least one item from her grandparents and great grandparents, which include an antique secretary's desk and chair, Depression-era drinking glasses, an old-style trunk, and a classic Singer sewing machine. But Jeanne's primary fascination in regard to collectable items is that of old crocks, of which she has roughly 50 on hand. The first item that got her hooked on crocks is shown in the photo below, and was acquired at an auction about 40 years ago. The Stoneware crocks that Bowers collects are quite versatile, often used in butter churning, and in holding jugs. They're also used as



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canning jars, and in preserving. And speaking of preserving, Jeanne also makes her own sauerkraut, which involves a 3-week period at the end of the process for 'fermenting'.

Jeanne's husband, Craig, was a law enforcement officer for 34 years, ending his run before retiring in 2007

as a homicide lieutenant. But retirement didn't slow him down. Craig is a walking 'ball of energy', as Jeanne states that he never slows down. He actually constructed and erected all the barns and sheds on their property, and is constantly on-the-move.

Jeanne's past career includes working at the Acme grocery stores, and she also was employed by the Runny Mead Elementary School. During the stint with the school, she was president of the Parent Teacher Organization.

RENT-A-LANE MAKES APPEARANCE AT WAYNESBORO BUSINESS EXPO

This past weekend, the Waynesboro Chamber of Commerce held its annual "Business Expo" for local vendors and merchants in Franklin County, PA. A few years ago, I joined the 'Chamber' with my primary contribution to the community involving my hobby of creating a portable bowling lane for small ball bowling. The Chamber of Commerce has been very supportive toward my interest over the years, even going so far as arranging an interview on a radio news talk program out of Chambersburg, PA, soon after I joined.

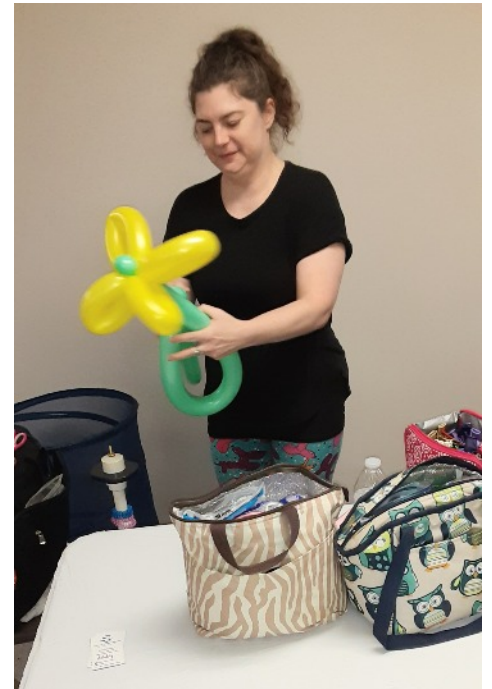
On Saturday, I took my portable lane to the Business Expo, without the intent of selling a service, but more so to entertain the kids who were in attendance (I was supposed to attend last year, but couldn't make it to that one).

The event started at 8:30 am and lasted about 3 hours. There were a lot of vendors in attendance, with tables set up for the different

businesses, such as insurance agents, investment brokers, local engravers, and even a spot for high-profile personalities, like Pennsylvania Senator Doug Mastriano. I didn't have a lot of time, nor opportunity to mingle, but did speak with a representative of the Waynesboro Community Concert Association, which is scheduled to host the Kenny Rogers band with Don Gatlin, and also Jackie Wilson impersonator, Chester Gregory, as well as a number of ladies' musical groups, ranging from country to the classic era of 1950s and 1960s.

In the neighboring areas to where my bowling lane was set up, were wonderful attractions for the kids, including a balloon artist, and a photo area in which children could have their pictures taken with characters adorned in princess outfits.

The bowling lane was very enjoyable to host. Mine wasn't a situation in which there was a constant line of kids wanting to try

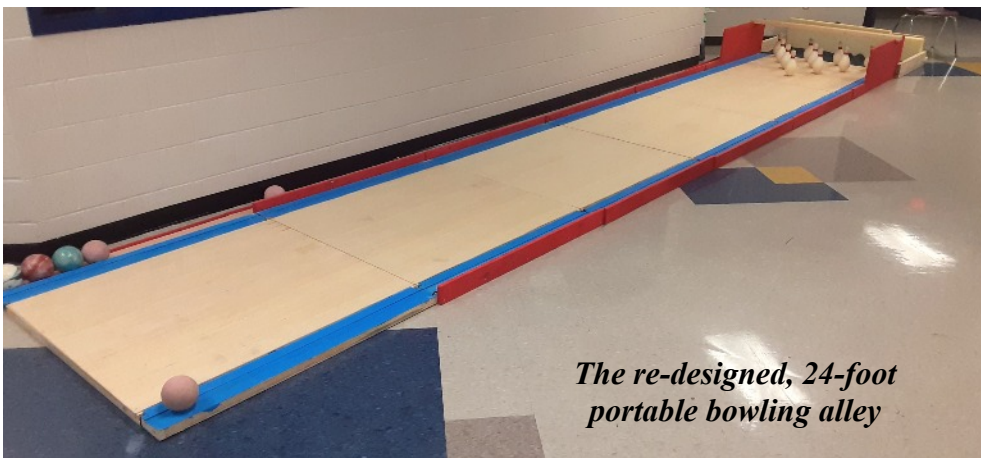


"Ashley" of Strouse Entertainment

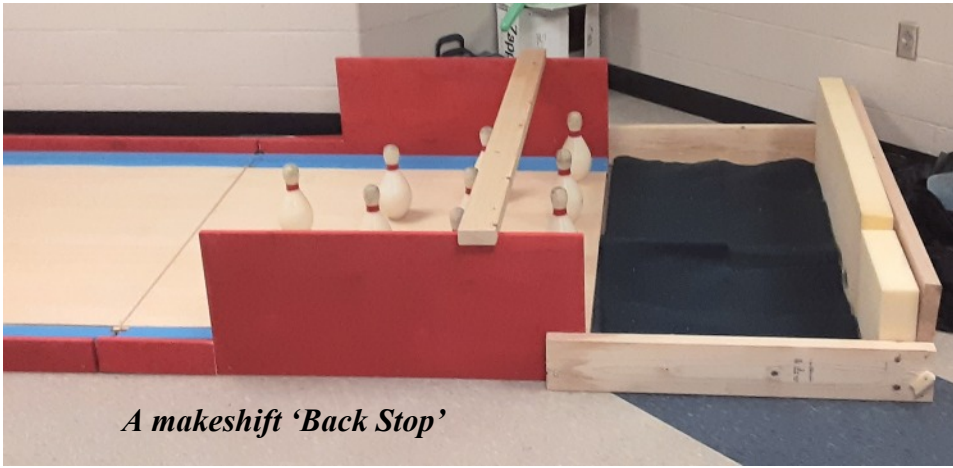
out the bowling lane. However, neither was there an extended lax time between visits from youngsters, some of whom were accompanied by parents, while others ventured out on their own to play the game of bowling.

Duckpins were featured on the 24-foot lane, and three duckpin balls were provided, and also three English skittle balls, which are a little smaller, more of a grip-able rubber, and weigh about 2-1/2 pounds.

I set up the lane initially, a day before the event. Once the lane was assembled during this "preview", one of the kids who was there with her mother was interested in the idea of bowling, and came over to watch.



The re-designed, 24-foot portable bowling alley



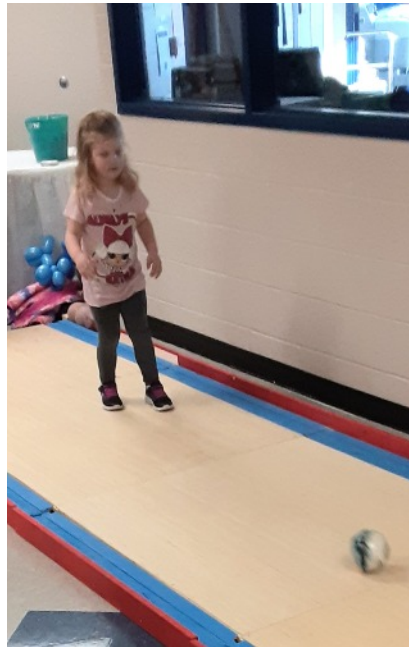
A makeshift 'Back Stop'

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Young lady duckpinner

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Twin sisters with skittle balls

BOWLING TIP: Moving Up or Back on the Lane

Here's a simple tip that might help to temporarily get you out of the doldrums. If you're struggling with your control, try moving either a half-step forward or backward before starting your approach to the pins. Sometimes, we all get out of sync with our timing. Often when a person bowls well in a game, s/he will get a little anxious in the next

game, and walk too fast in anticipation of continuing having a good game, and therefore the bowler might lose focus on their own basic mechanics. When that happens, your arm-swing might end up being a little late in catching up with your legs, and thus are the beginnings of timing issues. Moving forward might subconsciously force you to take

smaller steps, and subsequently slow your approach. Moving backward, on the other hand, might temporarily change your tempo in a different manner to allow a more casual, carefree delivery. Either way, these tips may not work for everybody, and aren't meant to be permanent fixes – just something to keep in mind to break the jinx.

SPARETALK CONTESTS: “An Analysis”



The Contests that have been referenced in earlier editions of “SpareTalk, the Newsletter” are winding down to a climax. The Eliminator event is now down to 6 survivors out of the 417 that started, while the Bracket Madness event is now down to semi-final matchups for this upcoming week in the 4 divisions, totaling 16 remaining players in all.

The tournament is based on Pins Over Average, and enjoys a variety of representatives from different bowling establishments, with an equal mix of different skill levels of bowlers. The bowling alleys with participants remaining in the contests are Dual Lanes (Hagerstown), Mt. Airy Bowling Center, AMF Dundalk (Baltimore), Congressional Country Club, and Crystal Lanes Entertainment Center (Minnesota). All the leagues are duckpins, except for the Minnesota establishment, which is a ladies Tenpin league.

The Eliminator competition, which involves a player being eliminated from the tourney if s/he bowls 10 pins or more under average in any game, has 6 survivors, comprised of 2 bowlers with averages in the 90s, 1 bowler in the 80s, and 3 players in the 70s.

While some of the higher average bowlers might argue that it's easier for a lower average to avoid a low game rather than a higher bowler simply because of needing to achieve a lower number, it's my opinion that a higher bowler is more likely to get flustered and to "press" or "tighten up" when spare breaks become scarce in a game, after encountering a series of splits or 'bad breaks'. Conversely, a lower average player is usually trying his/her best on every ball, despite running into a few obstacles.

In the Bracket competitions, there's a very even mix from lower average to higher average bowlers remaining in the tournament, as shown in the average ranges below:

130-139: 4 players
120-129: 1 player
110-119: 1 player
100-109: 4 players
90-99: 4 players
80-89: 2 players

Since the bracket head-to-head competitions are based on Pins Over Average, it's entirely a matter of who performs the best, based on individual effort, and not in regard to the score bowled. As they say, “the numbers don't lie”, and based upon the averages we see above, 100% handicap (Pins Over Average) doesn't seem to favor one average range more than another.

NEW LEAGUE PROJECTED AT THUNDERHEAD FOR 2023-2024 SEASON

A few months ago, I put out a few ‘feelers’ for an additional evening duckpin league at Thunderhead Lanes in Taneytown for the upcoming winter season, and the idea seems to have received some positive feedback, as indicated by one of my friends who rolls at Mt. Airy Bowling Lanes.

The proposed league would be a little different format from the standard handicap bowling league, but would essentially operate in the same manner. I will post updates in the week ahead.

EWING'S DUCKPIN BOOK AVAILABLE BY END OF MARCH

(As posted on Facebook)

The Golden Age of Duckpin Bowling

The Myths and Legends That Made the Game

When: Friday, March 31

Where:
Lucky Strike Lanes
185 Stafford Road
Mansfield, CT

5 pm - Book Signing
5:30 pm - Author Talk
6 pm Bowl with the Author

– Brian J. Ewing

Or, reserve a copy at
www.DuckpinBook.com

